

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6391
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0243

BELGRADE FOR CSCE DELEGATION

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PGOV, OEXC, TGEN, US, UR, SHUM, PINT, CSCE
SUBJ: US EXCHANGE SCIENTIST'S COMMENTS ON CURRENT SITUATION
OF SOVIET JEWS

REF: 77 MOSCOW 17094

SUMMARY: U.S. SCIENTIST MYRON BANDER MET WITH JEWISH/
REFUSENIK SCIENTISTS ON TWO OCCASIONS DURING BANDER'S
MONTH-LONG VISIT TO USSR UNDER INTER-ACADEMY EXCHANGE
AGREEMENT. HE REPORTED REFUSENIKS WERE DEPRESSED BUT
SEEMD TO HAVE NO MAJOR MATERIAL NEEDS. ONE
REFUSENIK, VIKTOR BRAILOVSKIY, REPORTEDLY CONSIDERING
SPLITTING UP HIS FAMILY IN A BID TO GAIN PERMISSION FOR
SOME FAMILY MEMBERS TO LEAVE. BANDER ALSO NOTED QUIET
DISSATISFACTION AMONG ACTIVE JEWISH SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY.
BANDER'S CONTACTS WITH REFUSENIKS DID NOT, APPARENTLY,
AFFECT HIS OFFICIAL EXCHANGE-RELATED ACTIVITIES.
END SUMMARY.
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1. A U.S. PARTICIPANT IN THE U.S. NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
SCIENCES - U.S.S.R. ACADEMY OF SCIENCES EXCHANGE
PROGRAM, THEORETICAL PHYSICIST MYRON BANDER OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE, VISITED THE EMBASSY
JANUARY 5 TO REVIEW HIS ONE-MONTH VISIT TO THE
U.S.S.R. UNDER THE INTER-ACADEMY AGREEMENT (21.00).

DR. BANDER ADVISED THAT DURING HIS TWO WEEK STAY IN MOSCOW HE HAD MET ON TWO OCCASIONS WITH JEWISH REFUSENIK SCIENTISTS AND HE OFFERED HIS GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THEIR CURRENT SITUATION.

2. THE QUOTE EMOTIONAL STATE UNQUOTE OF THESE SOVIET SCIENTISTS, DR. BANDER NOTED, IS VERY BAD, ESPECIALLY AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR THREE YEARS OR MORE TO LEAVE THE SOVIET UNION. BANDER WAS UNSURE HOW THESE REFUSENIKS WERE FARING FINANCIALLY BUT HE OBSERVED THAT THEY SEEMD TO BE LIVING PRETTY WELL AND NO ONE COMPLAINED OF MATERIAL PROBLEMS. IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUESTION WHETHER OR NOT THESE SCIENTISTS ARE SUBJECTED TO HARASSMENT OF ANY KIND, BANDER NOTED THAT THERE WAS NONE AT PRESENT. HE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT VIKTOR BRAILOOVSKIY, ONE OF THE MORE PROMINENT REFUSENIKS, WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY NERVOUS ABOUT HIS FAMILY'S SITUATION BECAUSE HIS SON IS APPROACHING MILITARY SERVICE AGE AND HAS BEEN DENIED ENTRANCE TO ANY UNIVERSITY. ACCORDING TO BANDER, BRAILOVSKIY IS CONSIDERING SPLITTING UP HIS FAMILY IN AN EFFORT TO GET SOME FAMILY MEMBERS OUT BEFORE HIS SON IS DRAFTED. HE IS HESITATNT TO DO SO BECAUSE OF THE OBVIOUS PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS, BUT HE BELIEVES THAT CONTACT HIS WIFE HAD WITH SENSITIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS IS THE MAJOR

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REASON WHY THE AUTHORITIES HAVE CONSISTENTLY REFUED HIS FAMILY PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE.

3. THE AMERICAN PHYSICIST COMMENTED THAT MOST OF THE REFUSENIKKS WISH TO LEAVE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S SAKE. EITHER THEY ALREADY HAVE OFFSPRING IN THE WEST (THE NOTED PHYSICIT MEIMAN, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS A DAUGHTER IN THE U.S.) OR THEY WISH TO SPARE THEM WHAT THEY PERCEIVE TO BE INCREASING OPPORESSION OF THE JEWS IN THE SOVIET UNION. FOR THE MOST PART, BANDER CONTINUED, PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS DO NOT PLAY A ROLE IN THE DECISION TO APPLY FOR EMIGRATION PERMISSION.

4. BANDER ALSO NOTED THAT DURING HIS STAY IN LENINGRAD AND MOSCOW HE HAD MET PROFESSIONALLY ACTIVE SCIENTISTS OF JEWISH ORIGIN WHO EXPRESSED QUIET DISSATISFACTION WITH THEIR PLIGHT AND THAT OF THE JEWS IN GENERAL IN THE SOVIET UNION. THESE THESE SCIENTISTS, BANDER OBSERVED, HAD NOT REQUESTED PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE AND WERE NOT AT PRESENT CONSIDERING DOING SO OUT OF PERSONAL AND/OR PROFESSIONAL

CONSIDERATIONS. THEY CONSIDERED THEMSELVES TO BE SUCCESSFUL AND WERE GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH THEIR PROFESSIONAL STATUS. THEY DID NOT WANT TO THROW THIS AWAY NOR DID THEY WISH TO SUBJECT THEIR FAMILIES TO THE UNPLEASANT EXISTENCE OF THE WOULD-BE IMMIGRANT AND POTENTIAL REFUSENIK. THESE JEWISH SCIENTISTS, BANDER CONTINUED, WERE ANGERED BY THE GROWING NUMBER OF RESTRICTIONS APPARENTLY PLACED ON OFFICIAL TRAVEL ABROAD BY JEWS. THEY WERE ALSO UPSET BY WHAT THEY CLAIM ARE GROWING RESTRICTIONS AGAINST THE ENTRY OF JEWISH YOUTHS INTO SOVIET UNIVERSITIES. SOME CLAIM, ACCORDING TO BANDER, THAT IT IS BECOMING IMPOSSIBLE FOR JEWS TO ENTER UNIVERSITIES UNLESS THEY HAVE HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS. (NOTE: THIS SUPPORTS CONFIDENTIAL

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REFUSENIK COMMENTS REPORTED REFTEL ABOUT INCREASING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST JEWS.)

5. WE ASKED BANDER HOW HE HAD MADE CONTACT WITH THESE REFUSENIKS AND WHETHER OR NOT HIS MEETING WITH THEM HAD LED TO PROBLEMS FOR HIM. BANDER RESPONDED THAT HE IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE OF CONCERNED U.S. SCIENTISTS, FROM WHICH SECRETARIAT HE HAD OBTAINED BRAILOVSKIY'S ADDRESS. ONCE HERE, BANDER SIMPLY MADE HIS WAY TO BRAILOVSKIY AND PRESENTED HIMSELF. WITH RESPECT TO PROBLEMS, BANDER NOTED THAT HE HAD NONE: HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO VISIT THOSE INSTITUTES AND THOSE PHYSICISTS HE WISHED AS WELL AS TO OBTAIN A LAST MINUTE EXTENSION OF HIS VISA TO PERMIT HE AND HIS WIFE TO TRAVEL TO CENTRAL ASIA. HE NOTED ALSO THAT HIS CONTACT WITH THE REFUSENIKS DID NOT AFFECT RELATIONS WITH HIS OFFICIAL HOSTS; THE SOVIET SCIENTISTS WITH WHOM BANDER WORKED HERE ENTERTAINED HIM REGULARLY IN THEIR HOMES. MATLOCK

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